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Introduction

In contemporary Okinawa, there are four distinct types of village settlement. The first and the most common is the village cluster. Houses are grouped in a central area, usually along or on both sides of a road, surrounded by farm lands and rice fields. The second, the shoe-string type, is less common. Here houses are lined along either side of a main street. The third is a here-and-there type of settlement. This has been called a yadori (Japanese) or yadui (Okinawan) village, translated as plantation, but this is too exalted a word.[1] These villages may have sub-settlements. Houses are scattered among intervening plots of cultivated land. In the fourth category are the modern improvisations: land formerly in forest, grass or shrub which has been reclaimed and used for houses and nearby cultivation, or former agricultural land now taken up for house sites, a result of increased population or of war time destruction of other parts of a village.

The basic type of Okinawan village is the cluster, a village small in area whose houses, close together, and on irregular winding lanes, are separated from one another by stone or rock walls, or by boundaries of trees or shrubs. The front part of the house compound usually is cut off from the road by a stone fence, running part way across, with the opening to the road obstructed by a stationary barrier, sometimes of stones, often of woven grasses.

In the village of a bygone age, there were large open spaces like a common on the outskirts "often appearing as glades in the forest." In this area, rice was laid out to dry, horse racing and other sports took place, the village council met, goods were bartered, justice administered, and festivals celebrated.[2] When approached from a distance, the older villages seemed literally buried in foliage. In the last century the larger villages still had rest huts (cung-qua) for travellers, usually government officials to use from one overnight stop to another. The older village also had a series of small buildings on stilts three to six feet long. These were granaries and food storehouses. Some houses were also on stilts. Older accounts have stressed the concealment of the Okinawan village, its houses separated from one another, its lanes lined or embowered with bamboo, with banana trees, or with arbors. To

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 48--ANALYST]

1 Higa, Shunchō. Structure of the Ryukyuan rural community. The Japanese journal of ethnology, 15 (1950), 63-66. In Japanese with English summary, 151.

2 The Luchu islands and their inhabitants, as cited, 457. See also Basil Hall, Account of a voyage of discovery to the west coast of Corea and the Great Loo-Choo island, 123, 124.

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Matsuda
Land Classification

Type of Land	Area in Tsubo	Approx. Acreage Equiv.
Rice (ta)	82,151	67.9
Dry crop land (hatake)	188,305	155.6
House sites (yashiki)	17,056	14.1
Village Owned forest (sanrin)	1,259,104	1040.6
Wild land (genya) a/	376,660	311.3
Village Owned shelter belts, groves	33,654	27.8
Religious sites (haisho)	2,883	2.4
Public building sites	81	b/
Miscellaneous	2,183	2.6
Total	1,963,077	1622.3

a/ Includes village and privately owned, but almost all is privately owned.

b/ Less than 0.1 acre

Source: Ginoza-son township office, Ginoza village, Okinawan Island. Dec. 1951.

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The coniferous forest (shinyōjurin) is along the shore, reaching inland short distances in those areas not given over to cultivation. Pine stands are valuable for typhoon protection. Inland, about half a mile to a mile from shore, the coniferous stands give way to a dense mixed forest of deciduous trees and shrubs. The predominant species in this broadleaved forest (katsuyōjurin) is a live oak, the shii. Ordinarily the shii grows to be quite large, but here in the dense stands its growth is stunted. While not impenetrable, it is difficult to go through these stands once one is off the foot path. Along these paths, there are huts where one may drop in for rest or shelter, charcoal kilns, stacked firewood (maki), and piles of long poles which have been cut and stripped to be carried down the mountain paths to the road for loading in trucks. [485]

The woodlands of this area may be classified, according to use, into two categories: (1) stands, groves, or clumps of trees which provide typhoon and windbreak protection (hoanrin). Shore shelter belts or groves are known as bōchōrin, those inland or on mountain tops as bōfurin. (2) The forests, maintained and used as a resource, for such materials as firewood, lumber, and charcoal.

In Matsuda, trees are used both for protection of houses in the

quire room and board are sometimes put up without compensation, and they agree, perhaps, to give some help with studies of the landlord's children. Only the village "doctor" takes transient guests, mostly visiting officials from the city, who pay for lodgings.

Although the household head is a legal owner of the family property, there is a feeling that it belongs to the family and everyone in the household identifies himself with his land and house. This is expressed in the language. A person who is asked, "Whose rice paddy is this?" would answer that it is the household's or "ours."

In addition to the communal land holdings and the property of the cooperative described earlier, the following items are shared. The government supplies a breeding boar to each village; it is then left in the care of one farmer. This animal is available to pig owners for studding on request, and a small charge is made for the upkeep of the boar. A few tools are jointly owned by several households. Threshing machines were bought jointly after the war by two or more families to defray the high cost of such equipment. These families could be neighbors or relatives. Today many are complaining that joint ownership works hardships during the busy harvest season when there is heavy demand for the machines. As a result, everybody wishes to own his own machine as soon as he can afford to. For tea harvesting, special clippers are owned by the village cooperative and loaned to people as they need them. Since tea harvesting, though seasonal, is not done by all families during the same day, sharing of these tools presents no difficulties.

Property of others is very much respected. Stealing among villagers is almost unheard of, except for some pilfering of green vegetables and fruits by children. Only one case was reported during the field-work period—a person tried to take some goods without payment from the community store. When a village meeting was called, and it was announced that the person's identity was known to the store manager, the merchandise was later replaced. Willful damage to fields is similarly strictly forbidden. No child would really think of doing such damage. But there are no formal rules about trespassing. Movement across other people's property is completely free and unchallenged.

ment. But how should a Taira child grasp, for instance, the meaning of a large hotel in the city, where travelers can stop, engage one or several rooms, have meals served either individually in the room or at the restaurant? The little Taira guesthouse, run by the doctor and to all extent and purposes a private home, is hardly an adequate model.

Learning by doing is, on the whole, an innovation in the school program. To find out what fifth- and sixth-grade students might have learned in the home by actually doing things, the school circulated a questionnaire which covered such items as: "Have you ever tried to make a simple telescope? Did you ever watch a plant grow from the time of seeding and make a scientific description of its progress? Did you ever build a small toolshed or other small structure by yourself? Did you ever make regular observations of weather phenomena and keep a record?" From our previous description of typical activities of Taira children, it is not surprising to learn that very few of these or similar experiences appeared on the answers in the affirmative.

At school, participation and learning by doing are found at least in a few instances. The basic skills of cleaning rooms by using rag and mop, as well as maintaining school grounds by cutting grass with a sickle and weeding with a hoe, may not have high educational value, but they carry over to the home and village situation. In the upper grades, students begin to do some gardening at school. Later in junior high school they work in their own small garden plots on the school grounds and in school rice paddies under teachers' supervision. Unlike the home situation, where learning also takes place by observation and doing, the teacher lays a foundation for solid knowledge by instruction and demonstration of proper techniques and by criticism of errors. The large number of students who work under guidance of a single teacher limits the practical value of such learning situations. It is evident, however, that there is an important qualitative difference between learning in the home situation and at school. Where the child does a chore in the village without trying to meet standards set by parents, the school child finds that the teacher scrutinizes his work carefully, judges, compares, picks and chooses the best performers from the poorer ones, and imposes standards for all to meet or excel. If a standard is set at all in the village, adults tend to either overlook it or simply fail to enforce it.